

February 17, 2010

Dear JGPO and Department of Defense,

This report, written by a coalition of University of Guam Faculty, expresses our unified opposition to the use of Pãgat Village as a firing range in the proposed military build-up on Guam. We, furthermore, reject the proposed mitigations as grossly insufficient means of ameliorating the loss of this culturally and historically irreplaceable site.

DEIS References:

Use of Pãgat Village for Firing Range, described in Volume 2:

“Route 15 Valley and Escarpment

“The proposed firing ranges for Alternatives A and B associated with the proposed action are located on the Route 15 valley and escarpment east of Andersen South. Approximately 60% of the Route 15 impact area has been surveyed. The unsurveyed areas are considered to be medium probability areas for archaeology because archaeological sites are known from the vicinity. Resource potential in the Route 15 survey area is high. Near the coast outside the project area, the Pagat Site Complex (Site 04-0022) is contemporary with the historically known Pagat Village, where a Spanish church was built in 1672 (Table 12.1-15). The Pagat Site Complex includes at least 20 *latte* sets, more than 50 mounds of artifacts and midden, remnants of trails, more than 30 mortars and grinding areas, an unknown number of caves and rock shelters, and other features (Carson and Tuggle 2007). Limited test excavations revealed a widespread and dense Latte Period deposit associated with the surface-visible remains, and remnants of an earlier occupation period were present in some locations (Carson and Tuggle 2007). Surveys of the Route 15 impact area indicate at least three other NRHP-eligible sites are located within this area (Dixon and Carson 2009). They include sites 04-0021, 04-0024, and 04-0642. Two of these sites are also traditional cultural properties, including the Pagat site and Marbo Cave, already identified in the Route 15 area (Griffin et al. 2009).” (Volume 2, Chapter 12, Page 12-19)

Recreational Uses of Pãgat, as described in DEIS:

“At present, there is a series of trails connected to the Pagat Trail. The trails are open to the public and feature sinkholes, caves, and rugged limestone formations. On a popular weekend, visitors comprising tourists, local boonie stomp groups, and morale, welfare, and recreation activities generating from Navy Barrigada may attract as much as 60 hikers (Andersen AFB 2009). Visitors have been known to swim at the bottom of a sinkhole where there is a fresh water source (Lotz and Lotz 2001).” (Volume 2, Chapter 9, Page 9-4)

Significant Impact to the Pagat site:

DEIS Table 19.2-3, “Summary of Training Impacts – Firing Range Alternatives” states that there will be Significant Impact due to the “Loss of access to and use of recreational resources (Guam International Raceway, Marbo Cave (spelunking and offshore fishing), Pagat Trail and associated trails, *suruhana* activities (Volume 2, Chapter 19, page 19-22).

Proposed Mitigation:

“Potential indirect impacts to NRHP eligible sites 04-0022 and 04-0021 (Pagat site) in the proposed firing area at Route 15 Alternatives A and B and to 04-0025 and 04-0642 (Marbo Cave and Marbo site) with Alternative B would be mitigated through implementation of a management plan. The Pagat Preservation Plan (sites 04-0021 and 04-0022) would be updated and executed. In recognition of the significance that Pagat cave has to various ethnic and historic groups, cultural access would be granted to the Pagat site when Navy procedures are followed. As stipulated in the PA, access to the Pagat site would be considered in light of military operational requirements and anti-terrorism/force protection security conditions and other pertinent circumstances as determined by the DoD at the time. Operational impacts would be mitigated through training of personnel working in the area to avoid impacts.” (Volume 2, Chapter 12, Page 12-49)

Discussion:

Pågat Remains The Most Archaeologically Significant Village Accessible To Civilians On Guam Today.

The Pågat Village site is irreplaceable – it is Guam’s single, largest repository of ancient Chamorro artifacts open to the civilian population, and thus it uniquely affords the Chamorro people a living link to the past. To desecrate Pågat would be akin to destroying Washington, D.C. It is a cultural center, whether or not all of the Chamorro people go there regularly, just as Washington, D.C. is the American political, historical, and cultural center, whether or not most Americans ever visit its quadrants.

The DEIS description of the Pågat site, from the 2007 Carson and Tuggle archaeological report, identifies some of the significant features of the Village, including “at least 20 *latte* sets, more than 50 mounds of artifacts and midden, remnants of trails, more than 30 mortars and grinding areas, an unknown number of caves and rock shelters, and other features” (DEIS, v2, ch 12, p. 12-19). In fact, Pågat Village contains extensive remains from both the Pre-Latte Period (1500 B.C.) and Latte Period (1000 A.D.). Its inclusion on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places (66-04-0022) reflects its archaeologically rich cultural resources.

Craib’s work at the Pågat site between October 1981 and May 1982 revealed that “Surface features within the site consist of two kinds, latte components (pillars and capstones) and mortars. Two standing latte are found near the center of the site. The

first, designated here as PGT-1, is an 8 pillar latte oriented perpendicular to the shore, cliffline, and the nearby 12 pillar latte, PGT-2. The latte is oriented along a rough east-west axis. Towards the eastern end of the site four pillars, probably from a single latte (EDL), are still erect” (Craib 1986:130). “Fifty stone mortars were located at the site, the majority (n=35) were made from basalt while the remaining 15 were made from limestone outcrops.... Most mortars are proximal to latte areas” (*Ibid*: 131).

Craib considered the possibility that the abundance of Federico palm (*Cycas circinalis*) at the site might explain the abundance of mortars. He commented on the relative “expense” of the mortars at the site, considering the fact that most are basalt and hence exotic to the locale. Craib thought that, although the artifact assemblage at the site is common, the imported lithic component made it somewhat distinctive.

Midden analysis from Reinman’s work suggested that people occupied themselves with “generalized collecting and/or turtle hunting” (*Ibid*: 139). Craib’s excavations revealed that there were both near shore reef fish and pelagic represented in the assemblage. Two of the pelagic species identified were Mahimahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*) and Black marlin (*Istiophoridae*). [Pelagic fishing during prehistoric times is one of the procurement strategies that separates Guam and the Northern Marianas from the rest of Micronesia. Sites that have pelagic fish bones are especially significant in Micronesia because of their possible links with sites (and hence prehistoric peoples) in Taiwan and the Philippines.]

Countering the misinformation introduced by later chronicles that suggested that latte were lived in by high status individuals, Craib states, “(I)t is my contention that we must proceed on the assumption that all latte served as supports for all residences and that it is variations in size class which reflects ranking within each village and not simply among a separate, exclusive high status group”(Ibid: 169). Rather, Craib proposed that status did not reflect an apical hierarchy, but instead reflected “horizontal dimensions based primarily on the principle of seniority within one’s kin groups” (*Ibid*: 173). Finally, Craib offered that the Pãgat investigations revealed that the next focus for research on latte in the Marianas had to be, “larger scale, areal excavations in an around latte” in order to examine how space was utilized within the site (*Ibid*: 184).

Thus both past and current archaeological research at Pãgat raises still-unanswered questions about our Chamorro ancestors and the environment they once inhabited. The apparent depositional and preservation characteristics of Pãgat Cave may be the best opportunity to find older archaeological deposits if indeed they exist here, and future excavations may be designed to accommodate this possibility. The possibility of submerged artifacts in the cave waters should also be considered, including potentially rare and well preserved materials that would be perishable in other contexts.

Pãgat Is A Significant Religious, Cultural, And Historic Site, Both In Ancient And Contemporary Times.

In contemporary Guam society, Pãgat continues to be a place of religious, cultural, and historical significance, as it was in ancient times.

Religious Significance

While there are many reasons for delineating the area's spiritual importance, one reason stands out in particular: the taotaomo'na of Pãgat. Translated loosely, taotaomo'na can mean "ancestors," "people of before," or "spirits." Ancient Chamorros believed that the spirits of their ancestors remained in the world to assist and protect them and therefore one had to treat their remains with great care and respect. Many Chamorros today continue to practice the ancient belief system, with an on-going respect for taotaomo'na and the places in which their spirits dwell. These spirit dwelling places can be found everywhere in Guam, and throughout the entire Mariana Islands as well, but are known to have an especially strong presence in Pãgat.

One testimony of the spiritual power at Pãgat, comes from Dr. Keith Lujan Camacho, assistant professor of Asian American Studies at UCLA, formerly a professor of Pacific History at the University of Guam.

Dr. Camacho states, "As a Chamorro, I, too, have experienced an encounter with the taotaomo'na in Pagat during the late 1980s, as have many others who have visited the site. For the sake of brevity, the taotaomo'na communicated to me by sprinkling pebbles on my face while I was asleep on the bed of a truck and while my elders were fishing in and beyond the reefs. Awoken by this flurry of activity, I immediately relayed my encounter to those of us who remained on the beach. Upon the return of my elder fishers, and upon our shared realization of the taotaomo'na's presence, we quickly distributed the catch of reef fish and lobsters, packed our belongings, and left the area. As a historian with interdisciplinary training in the humanities, and as a faculty member of two world-renowned universities (e.g., UCLA and UIUC), I can attest to the validity of these and related taotaomo'na experiences. In this respect, four points warrant both our attention and intervention: (1) the taotaomo'na in the Mariana Islands exist as a unique cultural phenomena; (2) a rich archive of familial histories verify the large presence of taotaomo'na in Pagat, Guam; (3) Pagat remains an integral site for the practice of Chamorro cultural beliefs; and (4) any material destruction of Pagat's landscape and seascape infringes upon the vitality of Chamorro cultural survival."

As a place of religious significance, Chamorros treat Pãgat with great respect, and our generation's responsibility is to protect and nurture the site so that it is treated with the respect paid to the world's great cathedrals and temples.

Cultural Significance

The Pãgat area is a symbolic place for contemporary Chamorros and the maintenance of their identity and spirituality. It holds this status for a number of reasons, relating in part to the presence of artifacts there and the site's natural beauty, combined with the fact that

it is one of the few places on Guam today where that combination can be experienced by Chamorro civilians without requiring a military pass or serving in the United States military.

In contrast to many historic sites on the island that have been looted or destroyed by development, Pãgat still contains a great number of historic artifacts. Chamorros who visit there can see artifacts, pottery shards, mortars and *latte* several hundreds of years old, lying around, and thereby experience the feeling of literally walking in the footsteps of their ancestors. It is for this reason that Pãgat has become a favored site amongst Chamorros who wish to reconnect with their ancient roots and become more in touch with their culture. Kie Susuico, a Chamorro artist and poet has become noted for taking weekly trips to Pãgat with groups of people of all ages, observes that group members love to hear the history of the area and see the artifacts there. It has become common for groups of Chamorros to visit the site and either meditate or chant around certain areas where there are concentrations of artifacts in order to show honor and respect to the spirits of their ancestors. Pãgat is a village alive with opportunities for Guam's youth to learn about and connect with their past – a past informed by both the traumas of violent colonization and the pride of a people who have survived numerous invasions.

Pãgat also plays a key role in the instilling of an environmental consciousness in people on Guam today, especially amongst the youth. As a site that can help illustrate Ancient Chamorro lifeways and settlement patterns, and as an ideal hike for showcasing a number of different island ecosystems, Pãgat is a popular location for high school and college field trips. Students who go there learn not only about the Guam's environment, but also, when contrasting that location with other public sites, it helps exemplify the need to preserve existing natural and historic areas, so as not to be lost like so many others.

Pãgat plays a role in maintaining Chamorro physical and mental health, endangered by the proposed build-up through the denial of access to native plants used by Chamorro healers (*suruhanu* and *suruhana*) to produce herbal medicines. The cessation of this cultural practice not only endangers Chamorro access to health care and medicine, but also violates the indigenous right to traditional intellectual property – in this case, to the production and dissemination of traditional herbal remedies. Pagat Village, for example, is one important site accessed by herbal healers. The DEIS states, "Potentially affected resources include: Guam International Raceway, Marbo Cave, Pagat Trail and associated trails in the vicinity, cultural gathering activities (*suruhana*), and off-shore fishing near Marbo Cave. Implementation of Alternative 1, regardless of the Training Complex Alternatives A or B, would cause the cessation of the present activities at all the resources mentioned because the Known Distance (KD) Range Complex is proposed in that location" (Volume 2, Chapter 19, page 19-11).

As a village where ancestral remains of the indigenous Chamorro people are buried, the defilement of Pãgat due to its use in the firing range complex threatens the psychological health of the Chamorro people. This proposed action will exact immitigable psychological injury to the Chamorro people and is incompatible with the cherished notion of allowing our ancestors to rest in peace.

Pågat's cultural significance also accrues from its importance as a fishing grounds for Chamorros. A statement from University of Guam Associate Professor Rick Castro shares the following relevant information and insight about Pågat:

In the early 1990s, when I was newly back from Hawaii and was getting into free diving/spear fishing, my friends and I would go to the east side of the island periodically, especially in the mid-late summer months when the winds would turn around (the period of turning-around winds is called "bendibat") or, at other times, altogether cease to blow, and the oceans would be dead calm for hours at a time. The Pågat region of coast was legendary for its fishing, as well as its difficulty and forbidding nature. When it was calm there, being in the ocean at night was otherworldly beautiful and eerie. I also went fishing there from the cliffs and tables as a teenager in the early 1970s. The ocean was terrible in its wild ferocity during the windy, stormy times.... During those times, the fishing was dicey and very difficult, very treacherous, but the prospect of bountiful catches that came hard and fast, without any warning, were astounding and rewarding.

I think it is safe to say that the Pågat region is a vital stretch in the overall Guam east coast fishing scene.... It is popular among a core group of seasoned, experienced spear fishermen (both free and scuba divers), as well as a core group of cliff/slide bait fishermen.

For these reasons, the idea of Pågat being lost to the people of Guam and the Chamorros in particular for military use would be considered offensive by most. The idea that the natural beauty or the artifacts there will be destroyed or disturbed to be used for a firing range will be detrimental in both a symbolic and a very concrete sense.

Land Dispossession at Pågat Perpetuates the Unresolved and Unsettling History of U.S. Military Land-Takings on Guam.

Authors of the DEIS have shown little understanding of the value of land to the Chamorro people and the enormity of the imposition that additional land takings place on future opportunities for the people of Guam. Guam is the only homeland that the Chamorro people of Guam have and they have seen the island become increasingly crowded with outsiders who have, over the last 65 years, arrived on island largely due to opportunities that stem from the American military presence here. While Chamorros have welcomed outsiders and have welcomed the military, there is simply not enough land on the island and monetary compensation is no equivalent for the loss of this ever-shrinking land base.

During World War II, the Chamorro people of Guam had little choice but to surrender their lands to the needs of the U.S. military and most did so willingly because they believed in the goodness of the United States. They also believed that much of this land would be returned one day. Some of this land was eventually returned, but much of it

environmentally ruined, the long term impact being that Chamorros have lost much of their agricultural land base and now are dependent on imported food for survival. Nevertheless, Chamorros have shown their willingness and ability to accommodate the military presence and have adapted to the new way of life that the bases brought. While there are many unresolved issues regarding the process of post-war land takings and compensation for these land takings, the Federal Government has in the years since 1950 steadily returned lands to the Government of Guam.

Prior to this proposed build-up, the only major attempt to expand the military's footprint on the island was during the Vietnam War when the Navy attempted to acquire 3,920 acres at Sella Bay for an ammunition wharf that would serve as a port for Naval Magazine, Guam. In this process, the Navy learned that, despite tremendous support for the Vietnam War, the public rose up against this proposed land acquisition. In the name of civilian-military relations, the Navy backed down and figured out a way to fit the ammunition wharf on property it already owned.

In the current plans for the Marine relocation to Guam, it appears that the lessons of history have been forgotten. Despite excess lands at Tarague, Naval Magazine and Admiral Nimitz Golf Course the military seems convinced that more land acquisition on Guam's northeast coastline is the only way to accommodate a firing range. This area, if acquired, will disrupt both the quality of life in Guam's civilian population center and will restrict access to some of Guam's most pristine and culturally significant wilderness and coastline.

The DEIS presents alternatives that require a choice between private lands and culturally significant land and water resources of Pãgat and the privately owned lands of Sasayan. However, there needs to be greater consideration of land already owned by the federal government. The reality of the Chamorro people's finite land base needs to be taken into greater consideration and the military's priorities need to be adjusted accordingly. This may mean taking a harder look at lands currently designated for military recreational purposes and a greater recognition of the sacrifices Chamorros have gone through to accommodate the military presence on the island since World War II.

Sites like Double Reef, Haputo, Spanish Steps, Ritidian, Luminao Reef (and even parts of Naval Magazine until the 1970s) are military owned lands that locals have had access to but we have learned that whatever program for access the military sets up can be changed at their convenience and there needs to be some kind of guarantee to protect access to such sites. There is also the issue of access to Jinapsan, Urunao and, of course, the demise of Star Sand Beach resort. Based on historical practices, the military has not gained the trust of the public when it comes to making sites accessible.

Recommendation:

Pãgat is an irreplaceable Village of historical, cultural, and spiritual significance to Chamorros past and present, and the proposed firing range represents a gross desecration of a sacred site.

Preferred Alternative: In order to protect the human and natural resources of Pãgat, as well in the interest of preserving the Chamorro people's cultural, historical, and religious heritage, **we, the undersigned University of Guam Faculty, support the "NO ACTION" Alternative.**

This report has been prepared by and is endorsed by the following University of Guam faculty:

Anne Perez Hattori, History
Dominica Tolentino, Anthropology
Peter Onedera, Chamorro Language
Richard Olmo, Geography
Michael Clement, History
Michael Lujan Bevacqua, English/History
Rita Sharma Gopinath, Psychology
Lisa Natividad, Social Work
Victoria Leon Guerrero, English
Hope Cristobal, History
Rick Castro, Library Sciences
Therese Terlaje, Legal Studies

Any correspondence regarding this statement should be sent to:

Professor Anne Perez Hattori
University of Guam
Division of Humanities
UOG Station
Mangilao, Guam 96923
ahattori@ugam.uog.edu